

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-313***

***May 21, 2002***

***Operations and Services***

***MARINE AND COASTAL WEATHER SERVICE PROGRAM, NWSPD 10-3***

***SPECIAL MARINE WARNINGS***

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>

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**OPR:** OS21 (R. Jacobson)

**Certified by:** OS21 (T. Pierce)

**Type of Issuance:** Initial.

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This directive supersedes WSOM Chapters D-07, Marine Weather Service Program, issuance 91-15, dated October 11, 1991; D-51, Marine Services for Coastal, Offshore, and High Seas, issuance 94-02, dated March 21, 1994; and D-52, Marine Services for the Great Lakes, issuance 91-02, dated March 29, 1991.

Signed

April 4, 2002

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Gregory A. Mandt  
Director, Office of Climate,  
Water, and Weather Services

Date

## SPECIAL MARINE WARNINGS

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1. Purpose. Issue Special Marine Warnings (SMWs) for localized, short duration, hazardous conditions, such as severe thunderstorm events, not adequately covered by existing marine warnings and forecasts.

2. Responsibilities. Areas of responsibility are defined in NWSI 10-302.

- WFOs having Great Lakes marine or CWF programs shall issue SMWs whenever events generating winds as noted below are occurring or are expected to occur over any portion of its marine area.
- The regions and field offices may determine other criteria requiring issuance of an SMW based on localized conditions or hazards.
- Except in designated areas along the East Coast, SMWs shall not be issued in OFFs or HSFs.

3. Special Marine Warnings - Contents/Procedures. SMWs may be issued while a small craft advisory or a gale, storm or hurricane force wind warning not associated with a tropical cyclone warning is in effect.

In general, SMWs shall always be issued when waterspouts are expected or occurring. When a tropical cyclone warning is in effect, however, SMWs should only be issued for waterspouts.

For events impacting both land and water, separate land and water warnings shall be issued.

SMWs are valid upon issuance.

3.1 SMW - Issuance. SMWs should be issued:

- Whenever local winds of 34 knots or greater are expected to occur for 2 hours or less. Exception: In very unusual cases, families of cold air funnel type waterspouts, may remain over an area (such as over the lower Great Lakes) for several hours. In these cases, an SMW may be issued having a valid time longer than 2 hours. Also in these cases only, appropriate CWFs or Great Lakes forecasts should be amended to headline such events.
- Whenever hail of 3/4 inch or more diameter is expected or is occurring.

3.2 SMW - Content/Format. SMWs shall be issued in the 'Bullet' format as defined in WSOM Chapter C-40/NWSI 10-701.

The format of the SMW shall be as below:

(WMO HEADER) (ISSUANCE DATE TIME)  
(AWIPS ID)  
(AREAL UGC CODE[S])-(EXPIRATION TIME)-

BULLETIN - IMMEDIATE BROADCAST REQUESTED  
SPECIAL MARINE WARNING FOR (REASON)  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE (CITY)(STATE)  
(VALID TIME) AM/PM (LOCAL TIME ZONE)(DAY)(DATE)

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAS ISSUED A

\* SPECIAL MARINE WARNING FOR...(MARINE FORECAST AREA AFFECTED)

\* UNTIL (ENDING EFFECTIVE TIME)

\* AT (TIME)...(DESCRIPTION OF STORM EVENT)

(INFORMATION FORECASTER WISHES TO ADD PLUS APPROPRIATE CALL  
TO ACTION STATEMENTS. It is recommended that only one Call to Action be included)

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Forecaster Name (Optional)

3.2.1. Descriptions. Hazardous conditions should be described with reference to well known coastal landmarks, rivers or bodies of water, or bathymetric features. Distances should be stated in nautical miles and speeds given in knots. When available, include any actual severe weather reports from coastal observers, mariners, data buoys, Coastal Marine (C-MAN) stations, or the USCG.

3.2.2 Other Information. Along with a call to action, the forecaster may include other information to help customers react appropriately.

3.3 SMW - Extension. If the time of the SMW is extended or the area impacted by the event is expanded, a new SMW shall be issued.

3.4 SMW - Cancellation/Expiration. All or part of an SMW may be canceled by a Marine Weather Statement (MWS). Once an SMW has expired, a follow up MWS should be issued noting this.

**APPENDIX A - Example of Special Marine Warnings:**

WHUS56 KSGX 181217  
SMWSAN  
PZZ750-181400-

BULLETIN - IMMEDIATE BROADCAST REQUESTED  
SPECIAL MARINE WARNING FOR STRONG THUNDERSTORMS  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAN DIEGO CA  
515 AM PDT TUE APR 18 2000

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAS ISSUED A

- ★ SPECIAL MARINE WARNING FOR...  
INNER WATERS FROM SAN MATEO POINT TO THE MEXICAN BORDER
- ★ UNTIL 700 AM PDT
- ★ AT 510 AM PDT...NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DOPPLER RADAR DETECTED A THUNDERSTORM 40 NM WEST SOUTHWEST OF SAN MATEO POINT. THIS STORM SHOULD BE NEAR SAN MATEO POINT BY 6 AM PDT. OTHER THUNDERSTORMS ARE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP EAST AND SOUTHEAST OF SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND. THESE STORMS WILL BE MOVING EAST NORTHEAST AT 25 KT CROSSING THE COAST BETWEEN SAN MATEO ISLAND AND THE MEXICAN BORDER THROUGH 7AM PDT. THESE STORMS ARE PRODUCING HEAVY DOWNPOURS...SMALL HAIL...WIND GUSTS TO 35 KTS...AND WATERSPOUTS.

WATERSPOUTS CAN EASILY SWAMP BOATS AND CREATE LOCALLY HAZARDOUS SEAS. SMALL CRAFT ARE URGED TO STAY IN PORT OR SEEK SAFE HARBOR IF THREATENING WEATHER APPROACHES.

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WARREN